How to use
Ladybird Readers
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Introducing Ladybird Readers

The Ladybird Readers series has been leveled by experts to gradually introduce key words to learners of English as they begin their reading journey.

The levels follow the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and support students who are taking the Cambridge English Young Learners (YLE) exams. For more information on the CEFR and YLE exams, please see page 6.

Ladybird Books, part of Penguin Random House, is an internationally recognized publisher of children’s books, and has produced high-quality reading material for more than 100 years. Ladybird Readers builds on this reputation to provide an experience of reading a variety of short, whole books as recommended by the Extensive Reading Foundation (http://erfoundation.org/wordpress).

Teachers, parents, and children can choose:
- Traditional stories children may know already, such as Rapunzel and Aladdin.
- Stories about much-loved character brands like Peter Rabbit, Moomins, Transformers or Peppa Pig.
- Stories of everyday adventures featuring children like themselves.
- Nonfiction books about the world around them, including BBC Earth and Scuderia Ferrari titles.

Ladybird is famous for the quality of the illustrations that accompany the words. Great care has been taken to match a small number of words with a large illustrated scene, so that children can check the meaning of the words. Ladybird works with the best artists to produce beautiful illustrations that support understanding of the story.

The books are designed for young readers to enjoy reading a variety of short, whole books as recommended by the Extensive Reading Foundation (http://erfoundation.org/wordpress).

Teachers, parents, and children can choose:
- Traditional stories children may know already, such as Rapunzel and Aladdin.
- Stories about much-loved character brands like Peter Rabbit, Moomins, Transformers or Peppa Pig.
- Stories of everyday adventures featuring children like themselves.
- Nonfiction books about the world around them, including BBC Earth and Scuderia Ferrari titles.
Why do we need graded readers?

Reading is the most important skill that children learn. It is the key to learning about the world for themselves. Graded reading books are shorter and simpler than normal books, and give a step-by-step path to independent reading. They gradually introduce new vocabulary and sentence structures at a pace that allows children to gain confidence as they learn to read.

Young English-language learners benefit from specially written books that grade the language based on words they already know, while providing an opportunity to learn a handful of extra words via a glossary or Picture words section. Graded readers for beginners will use just 25 to 200 words, most of which children will recognize from their English lessons.

As children learn more English, they move up a step to a level of graded reader that uses more words in slightly longer texts. This approach is motivating because learners can see how they are progressing, and discover that they can read and enjoy narrative texts in English.

Graded readers help to improve the fluency of children’s reading by providing extensive reading. Extensive reading is about giving children a variety of books, including nonfiction titles, and encouraging them to read at least one book every two weeks. Reading widely helps children to learn about the different ways of organizing meaning in books. For example, they learn the difference between stories, which organize events in a storyline, and nonfiction texts, which organize information into classifications.

How children learn to read

“Top-down” processing to understand meaning

Children usually learn to read in their first language between the ages of five and eight. They start by listening to an adult read while they follow the pictures in a book and gradually realize that the printed sentences match the information they hear.

Using familiar, traditional stories like Cinderella or Little Red Riding Hood is a great way to begin reading in a foreign language because children often already know the storylines. Once children know the content of the story, they can pay attention to what each sentence really means, rather than just reading the words. This is called “top-down” processing because children work from comprehension of the whole meaning of the story in a mental map, down to the recognition of individual sentences and words.

“Bottom-up” processing from individual words

Children also begin to recognize how letter sounds combine to make a whole word, for example, how the letters e, a, and t make the sound of the word “cat”. Then, they learn how individual words form sentences. This is called “bottom-up” processing because reading is built up from small parts. It is also referred to as “decoding”, as children learn how letter sounds combine to make words.

Children whose first language does not use the English alphabet will need to spend time learning the alphabet sounds. Then, they can play with individual letter cards to make words. It is best to start with words such as look, book, and cook, which have regular correspondences between how they sound and they are spelled. This is called the phonics approach to reading.

Becoming a fluent reader

All children use the same top-down and bottom-up processes in reading, whether they are reading in a foreign language or their first language.

However, there is a big difference in the number of words children know. In their first language, beginner readers will know around 2,000 words in spoken language. When learning a foreign language, children only meet about 500 words in their first 100 hours of learning, and they will only remember some of those words.
Ladybird Readers levels

Common European Framework of Reference

Most teaching programs and textbooks for learners of English as a foreign language are based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). This framework describes how learners use simple language to communicate at a basic level (A1) and then progress toward communications that require more vocabulary and longer grammatical structures (B1 upward). The aim of most primary language teaching is to ensure that each child becomes a Basic User of English at the A1 or A2 level of the CEFR. English textbooks for young learners often introduce simplified language at this Basic User level. This same simplified language is used as a grading framework for the early levels of Ladybird Readers.

At the Basic User level, children encounter the most common, everyday words that are short and easily remembered. Experts have created the word lists for each level of the Ladybird Readers with this aim in mind. Each Reader also introduces some new words that are specific to the story or topic.

Cambridge English: Young Learners Exams

As well as using the CEFR as their guiding framework, the Ladybird Readers series is also leveled according to the Cambridge English: Young Learners (YLE) exams syllabus.

Children can take the YLE official assessment to grade their reading and writing skills. The table below shows how each Ladybird Readers level fits with these assessments. When your class or child completes the activities at the back of a Ladybird Readers book, you will notice that many activities are marked to show they are practicing skills for the YLE.

Accelerated Reader and Lexile measures

Each Reader has its Lexile measure on the back cover, and this information is also given in the Lesson plans for easy reference. The series is also leveled against the Accelerated Reader program.

Assessing children’s progress in reading

Children’s progress in reading usually follows these stages.

1 Beginner stage (Beginner to Level 1)
At the first stage, children will use bottom-up processes to start to identify the sounds made by the letters, and will rely on their knowledge of the top-down general meaning of the story. They will use clues from the pictures and the shape of a word.
Lesson objectives

Vocabulary focus

People:
parents, prince, witch

Verbs in the past simple:
called, came, climbed,
could, cried, cut, fell, got, grew, had, heard,
hurt, left, lived, put, said, saw, started, stopped,
talked, threw, told, took, traveled, waited,
walked, wanted, was/were, went

General:
lettuce, married, palace, tear, thorn,
tower

Grammar focus

Past simple

Reading skills

Identifying the sequence of events

Cross-curricular connections

Music (song)
Social Studies (good and bad behavior)

Resources

Reader
Activity Book
Flashcards 71-81
Audio download (UK/US) tracks 1, 3, 4

Timing: 40–60 minutes

This is to be used as a general guide and will
depend on group size, the pace of learning, and
the children’s language ability.

We would suggest 10 minutes for
Before reading, 20 minutes for
During reading and
10 minutes for
After reading. Additional time
can be used for further activities.

Taken from her parents by a witch, poor Rapunzel lives
alone in a tower. Until, one day, a prince rides by ...

CEFR Level A1+
YLE movers
Text type: traditional tales
Word count: 512
Lexile measure: 490L

Lesson plan

Before reading

Show the children the cover of the Reader but
hide the title. Point to the picture and ask:
What can you see? Where is the girl? Do you
know who she is? Why is her hair very long, do
you think?

Reveal the title and explain that the girl is
Rapunzel. Find out if the children already know
the story and, if so, what they can remember
about it.

During reading

Read out the story or play the recording
(Audio track 1). Ask the children to follow
in their Reader. After every few pages, stop
and ask questions to check the children's
understanding. Focus on events in the story, for
example:

Teacher's Resources

These resources and more
are available to download from:
www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk

Ladybird Readers components

A range of graded Readers sit at the heart
of the Ladybird Readers series, providing
leveled reading practice through new
fiction, popular characters, traditional
tales, and nonfiction. Each Reader has a
visual glossary of Picture words, as well
as activities to develop and consolidate
children’s language skills.

Each Reader (in Starter to Level 4) has an
accompanying Activity Book, which gives
children further opportunities to practice
reading, writing, spelling, listening, and
speaking in English. It also includes a fun
song or chant to reinforce key vocabulary
from the Reader.

Free downloads

● Flexible, title-specific Lesson Plans
provide further activities and guidance
for using the Readers in the classroom
or at home.

● An Answer Key is available for
every Reader and Activity Book,
and also contains scripts for the
listening activities.

● Audio downloads are available in both
British and American English. These
include recordings of the Reader text,
listening activities, and the song or
chant for each title.

● Role plays are available for every
fiction Reader, giving students the
opportunities to bring the stories to life.

● Flashcards are available for every
level from Starter to Level 6,
and contain cards featuring the
sounds and words used in the Readers.
Beginner level

The Beginner level gently introduces children to their first phrases in English.

Everyday conversational phrases, such as Good Morning, where is it?, and how many? are presented in simple, repeated sentences. The story illustrations can be used to introduce topic-based vocabulary when the children are ready.

Simple activities are included at the back of each Beginner-level book. These activities encourage children to practice the phrases introduced in the story and help them begin to use the phrases in real-life situations.

Starter-level structure

The Starter level is designed to be a shared reading experience. An expert reader can help beginner readers as they take their first English reading steps.

Each Starter-level Reader has two versions of the story: The first version introduces the phonemes (sounds), for example, s a t p i n. Go through these phonemes, listening to and practicing the pronunciation of each sound. The second version introduces sight words, first on their own and then used in full sentences.

Activities at the back of the Reader provide further practice of the phonemes and sight words, and give opportunities to talk about the story content.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Starter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Phonics</th>
<th>Sight Words</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Alphabet Book</td>
<td>A–Z</td>
<td></td>
<td>Who am I?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Is it Nat?</td>
<td>s a t p i n</td>
<td>a is it</td>
<td>Feeling safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nat Sits</td>
<td>s a t p i n</td>
<td>an in sit</td>
<td>Staying calm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Top Dog and Pompom</td>
<td>m d g o c k</td>
<td>and can I into no</td>
<td>Caring for others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Top Dog is Sick</td>
<td>m d g o c k</td>
<td>got not</td>
<td>Taking part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The Fun Run</td>
<td>e u r h b f l</td>
<td>at get go has off the to up</td>
<td>Following instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Gus is Hot!</td>
<td>e u r h b f l</td>
<td>full his of on put</td>
<td>Helping others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Jazz the Vet</td>
<td>j v w x y z qu</td>
<td>be but had he him she tell was</td>
<td>Helping others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Vick the Vet</td>
<td>j v w x y z qu</td>
<td>did will will</td>
<td>Taking part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Dash and Thud</td>
<td>ch sh th ng</td>
<td>if run then they with yes</td>
<td>Looking after each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Big Bad Bash</td>
<td>ch sh th ng</td>
<td>big long that this</td>
<td>Friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The Big Fish</td>
<td>ai ee oo oo</td>
<td>her look see them</td>
<td>Being careful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The Big Ship</td>
<td>ai ee oo oo</td>
<td>let me my too</td>
<td>Exploring our world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Martin and Lorna</td>
<td>ar or ur ow oi er</td>
<td>all are for</td>
<td>Being grateful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Farmer Carl</td>
<td>ar or ur ow oi er</td>
<td>cut down good help now</td>
<td>Being helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The Big Dipper</td>
<td>igh ear air ure</td>
<td>as have like said some went you</td>
<td>Being brave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The Silver Ring</td>
<td>igh ear air ure</td>
<td>come from so stop we what</td>
<td>Being patient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is phonics?

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read by helping them to understand the relationships between letters, sounds, and words. It is a popular teaching method for native English speakers, and is increasingly used with children who are learning English as a foreign language. This is because it gives children the tools they need to improve their reading, writing, and pronunciation.

The English alphabet has 26 letters, but approximately 42 related sounds. Phonics teaching helps children to identify sounds that relate to individual letters, such as /æ/ in cat, as well as sounds that relate to combinations of letters, such as /ear/ in hear.

With this understanding, children will be able to read, spell, and pronounce new and more complex words in the future.

How can I introduce phonics?

Phonics teaching can be introduced in the classroom or at home using short activities and games.

Make children aware of sounds common in English and the children’s first language wherever possible. Use words the children know to highlight and identify sounds.

1 Use Flashcards or objects

- **Find the sound**: stick a selection of Flashcards on the wall, or put them down on the floor or table. Ask the children to find words with a particular sound, such as /ɛ/ in wet. Try using a different sound each day.
- **Sound pairs**: ask the children to sort through the Flashcards to find words with matching sounds, such as beard and gears, or tap and tin.
- **Sound craft**: select a sound of the week. Draw, paint, and decorate a large cut-out of the letters that represent the sound. The children should find objects or Flashcards containing that sound to create a sound display table.

2 Use chants, songs, and rhymes

Help the children to become familiar with natural rhythm and rhyme, by learning traditional nursery rhymes, songs, and chants.

3 Use story books or graded readers

Storytelling helps children to develop linguistically, cognitively, and emotionally. Stories explore familiar themes and provide a playful and imaginative context for children to experiment with the sounds of English.

They contain high-frequency words, such as animals, family, and food, as well as words such as dragon, pirate, and giant, which inspire children’s imaginations.
Inside a Starter Reader

Phonics focus
(Reader pages 4—5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phonics focus</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>j v w x y z qu</td>
<td>1 Say the sounds. Circle the word with the same sound. Vick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vun Jen liquid</td>
<td>2 v Jen jet wet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yellow mix neb</td>
<td>3 z neb Vik wet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wet zoo Vick</td>
<td>4 j liquid zoo Jen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

The phonemes on this page are the key sounds to practice with your children, offering them an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the sounds before you move on and read the story.

The phonemes are visually represented and can be listened to in the audio download. Pay particular attention to the pronunciation of the sounds and try not to lengthen it unnecessarily. For example we say ‘ss’ not ‘ssss’, and ‘p’ and not ‘puh’.

Then, blend the sounds together to read the words underneath the pictures and point to the phonemes in their written form (graphemes), as you follow the letters with your finger.

These pages can be used:
- to introduce new phonemes
- to practice learners' previous knowledge
- to focus on pronunciation
- to explore simple oral blending and segmenting of phonemes

Activities
- Listen to the audio and point to the graphemes that represent the phonemes you can hear.
- Practice saying the sounds together.
- Practice grapheme-phoneme correspondence (GPCs): Ask, “Can you point to the /s/ sound?”
- Complete the simple activity on page 5 to reinforce the learning of these focus phonemes.

Look at the story
(Reader pages 6—15)

The **Look at the story** pages contain the book illustrations and simple words that include some of the phonics focus sounds from pages 4—5, but there is no story text at this stage. Looking at these pages prepares the children for reading and listening to the full story. They can practice blending the key sounds to read simple words, gaining vital reading confidence as they do so.

Activities
- Encourage the children to use their phonics knowledge to blend the sounds together and read the words.
- Give the children time to have a go themselves but if they get stuck on a sound or word, remind them what it is and move on to the next one. You can always return to it later on if you wish.
- Talk about the pictures together and ask simple questions, such as “What kind of animal is Top Dog?”
- Use the Flashcards and say, “Find a /p/ word.” Make letter headbands for some of the children to wear, with a focus sound on each one. Give the rest of the children a Flashcard. Their task is to find the child wearing a headband with their sound and sit down together in groups.
The Read the story pages can be read aloud or listened to alongside the audio download. Begin by looking at the sight words on page 17 of the Reader. Sight words are sometimes called high-frequency words because they are words that are common in the English language. As these words are used so frequently, it is a good idea for children to memorize them so they can be read fluently and easily. The more these sight words are read and practiced, the more the children will be remember them. This will develop reading confidence.

The first time you read the story, you may prefer it to be an extended listening activity for the children, so that they can enjoy the story without interruption. Encourage the children to listen to and look at you so they can see the expression you put into your reading. They will learn how your voice changes when making statements and asking questions, and how dialogue sounds different to narration. For example, you might read the page above in a happy, cheerful voice!

The second time you read or listen to the story, ask the children to follow the words with their finger or do some of these activities.

Activities
- Ask the children to turn to a certain page and find a sight word. They could stand up when they find it.
- As you read together, ask questions, such as “Is he happy?”, “Why?”, “Why not?”.
- Ask the children to listen to the story and shout, “Stop!” when they hear a sight word or a focus sound they are practicing. Congratulate them and then continue the story.
- Check the children have understood the story by asking questions such as “What happened in the end?” or “What was your favorite bit of the story?”

Decoding words and building sentences
These activities ask children to blend or segment words to build simple sentences. Tasks include completing words using focus sounds or finishing sentences using sight words. The activities encourage children to blend the words for reading and to segment the words for spelling and writing.

Comprehension of meaning
There are also activities to check the children’s comprehension of story content. These activities often focus on reading the word or sentence and circling the correct word to complete it. Children may be asked to look at the pictures, read the sentence, and choose if the sentence matches the picture or not.

Answer Keys to all the activities are available to download from the website: www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk
Sound association activities ask children to listen to the sounds they can hear in a word as they write the word to match the picture. This develops a child’s oral blending and segmenting, as well as their listening and writing skills.

Sound differentiation activities help children to hear the phonemes in a word and locate their graphemes. This develops children’s blending skills to read, as well as their segmenting skills to write and spell.

The accompanying Activity Books provide practice of key English language structures and vocabulary and continue to develop the children’s phonics skills. These activities provide further practice of the key sounds that have been introduced in the Reader, as well as develop the children’s sound recognition, association, and differentiation skills.

These activities aid progression from oral blending and segmenting, to the practice of blending sounds to successfully read a word, and segment phonemes to spell accurately. Earlier activities encourage children to locate graphemes and correctly select a word that matches a picture, as well as write and spell words to complete a task. Later activities develop the ability to read and understand simple sentences in order to complete the task.

At word level, activities to check the children’s reading and writing skills include:

- Find words in a word snake
- Draw lines to match words to pictures
- Write words to match the pictures
- Read and circle the correct words

At sentence level, activities offering practice in reading whole sentences and recognizing graphemes include:

- Look at the picture, read the sentence, and color the correct word
- Complete the words using the correct graphemes
- Look at the pictures, read the sentences, and choose if they are right or wrong

Answer Keys to all the activities are available to download from the website: www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk
Using Chants

Saying and repeating chants contributes to children’s cognitive development. It helps to reinforce literacy and numeracy skills, and to develop children’s memory. The chants also support children’s physical development — acting out the chant can improve coordination, and develop fine and gross motor skills.

Children’s linguistic skills are improved as chants support phonemic awareness, drawing attention to the pronunciation of individual sounds, and the intonation and rhythm of the English language. They are also easy to memorize.

Above all else, the chants are fun and sociable. They encourage cooperation and are suitable for different learning styles.

The chants on page 16 of the Ladybird Readers Activity Books provide a grand finale which children will love. They target the focus sounds used in the story, and provide meaningful, fun repetition through catchy rhythms.

Audio recordings of the chants are available to download from: www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk

Activities
- Before listening, children can match the sounds in the chants to the Flashcards. Show them the Flashcards of the sounds and the words with those sounds.
- Divide the children into sound and word groups. Give each sound group a sound from the chant, and each word group a word from the chant. When listening to the chant, the sound groups should join in with their sound, and the word groups should chant their word.
- After listening to the chants, encourage the children to think of more words with the key sounds. They could even make a new chant by substituting the words in the recorded chants with their own.

Using Flashcards

Flashcards for all of the Starter Level books are available to download from the website: www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk

Activities
- Discovery bag
  Choose Flashcards for words you would like to pre-teach or revise with the children, and put them in a brightly colored bag or box. Slowly take each card out of the bag or box, and ask the children to say the word.
- Find me a…?
  Place the Flashcards on the wall. Mime a word for the children to point to. Once the children are confident in this, ask them to mime the words for their partner to guess.
- Whispering game
  Ask the children to sit in a circle, and place the Flashcards in the middle of the circle, on the floor. Whisper one of the Flashcard words to the child on your left. The whisper is passed from child to child. The last child picks up the card representing the word they heard. Next time, whisper a word to the second child on your left, and so on.
- Who has got the…?
  Ask a number of children to stand at the front of the room. Give each of these children a Flashcard to hold behind their back. Ask, “Who has got the…?”, and encourage the other children to guess. They should shout out the name of a child at the front, who then shows their Flashcard. Continue until the children remember who has each word.
- Categories
  Drop all the Flashcards on the floor (as if by mistake), and ask each child to pick one Flashcard up. The children should take it in turns to show their Flashcard, and say what it is. Then, encourage the children to put their cards into categories. Ask, “Who has got an animal?”, “Who has got a fruit?”
- Sound matching
  Give a Flashcard to each child. Ask the children to find another child who has a card with a sound that matches theirs.

The downloadable Flashcards can be used in many different ways.
Role-play and drama are powerful teaching tools through which children can develop their communication skills in a second language. Drama brings language to life, and makes it real, purposeful, and personal. It also helps to develop children’s interpersonal skills as they collaborate, make decisions, organize, and delegate roles.

Starting out in drama

You can begin to familiarize the class with drama activities through mime, gestures, sound, and imitation.

Extended drama activities

Once the children feel more confident speaking English, you can move on to slightly more advanced techniques. These include simple role-play and drama, using language related to the Readers, such as “Can I sit in it?”, “Yes!”. If the Reader has plenty of dialogue, the children can act out the story.

Managing drama activities

Setting up a role-play or drama activity carefully will help it to succeed, so try to consider the following in your planning.

- Use the available space effectively (move chairs and tables to create a stage).
- Establish a clear framework with a step-by-step lesson plan.
- Think about the language the children will need and practice this in advance.
- Prepare props, such as drawings, objects, backdrops, puppets, or masks.

A role-play script for each Starter Reader is available to download from the website: www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk

Making props

Making props for role-play and drama is something that the children can be involved in. This type of activity helps to bring the language and story context to life. It provides another opportunity to revisit and reinforce key language, and is a sociable, collaborative, and creative way to explore the story. There are all kinds of craft activities you could use, depending on the story context.

Activities

- Reusing items
  Some props will be existing items that children can find and reuse. These might include empty food packages, hats, scarves, bags, glasses, shells, leaves, feathers, or any other easily obtainable item.

- Create a prop box
  Prop boxes can be grouped by theme, such as on the farm, at the zoo, at the doctors, or on the beach. These props will spark the children’s imagination, encouraging them to initiate role-play and exploration.

- Masks
  Make, color, or paint simple face masks for the children to wear during role-play. These could be animal masks or character masks. Card or felt are good materials to use.

- Headbands
  These are a useful alternative to masks, and can be made out of card. Children can draw and decorate them according to the language and story context.

- Puppets
  Simple finger or stick puppets really capture the interest of young children. They help to foster children’s social interaction with their peers, and are ideal to use in chants, acting, and role-play.

- Origami
  Children are fascinated by the way that something familiar and tangible can be made from just a piece of paper. Dogs, cats, boats, and hats are particularly straightforward, and can be decorated and used in drama activities.
Using Ladybird Readers (levels 1 — 6) in the classroom

Children aged five to eight learn first from sharing a book with an expert reader who reads aloud to them. As a classroom teacher, you will begin by choosing a book for the whole class to share as you read aloud or listen to the free audio download. Children can follow using their own copy of the Reader. The youngest children learn basic skills, such as how to follow the text from left to right. Older children will know how to read, but will still enjoy hearing the book read to them, because it helps them to follow the story.

If you put lots of expression into your reading, children will learn how your voice changes from making statements to asking questions, and how dialogue sounds different from the narration of the story. So, for example, if you were reading the page below, you would speak in the angry voice of the witch as she asks Dorothy for the shoes.

Different voices could also be created for the lion, tin man, and scarecrow to differentiate their characters and give them color, depth, and charm.

Before reading
Use the book’s cover and the Picture words page at the beginning of each Reader to capture the children’s interest. Hold up the cover of The Wizard of Oz, for example. Ask questions such as: “Who is she?”, “What kind of animal is this?”, “Where are they?”, and, “Where are they going?” to check whether the children already know something about the story and its key words.

During reading
Read the whole story aloud or listen to the audio download, but check that the children are following. Be prepared to stop and help them if they become lost. At the end, check the children’s understanding, referring to three or four pictures in the book from its beginning, middle, and end. This helps to develop children’s skills in top-down processing by enabling them to make a mental map of the storyline.

Even the youngest children should be able to follow the printed sentences in their books on a second reading. They begin to grasp the structure of how one sentence builds from the previous sentence. Ask the children to put their finger on the beginning of each sentence and trace through each of its parts as you say it. This method of finger following helps make them aware that their eye is tracking from left to right across the line of printed text. The ability to eye-track from word to word is an important part of bottom-up processing.

Listen and repeat
Traditional stories often have phrases in dialogues that are repeated throughout the text. Encourage the children to join in your reading of a story by repeating these phrases. For example, they can repeat this dialogue from Topsy and Tim: Go to the Zoo (Level 1).

“Here are the penguins! Can we have a penguin?” asks Topsy and Tim.
“No, you cannot have a penguin!” says Mommy.

Gradually increase the amount that children can repeat from the text, to develop their reading confidence.
Paired reading

**Paired reading** helps to give children the confidence to read aloud, by sharing the reading with an adult or an older child. The child and the “expert reader” take turns to read a page or a part in a dialogue.

**Independent reading**

As children become confident in reading, they can choose their own books and work at their own pace. This is most likely to happen at Level 4 in the *Ladybird Readers* series. Before they start reading the books, ask them what they already know about the topics and what they want to find out. If the children are reading *Sam and the Robots* (Level 4), for example, ask them what they already know about robots. Then, ask them what other things they’d like to learn about robots. Write some questions on the board about the robots in the story for the children to answer after reading; this will help them to organize their mental map of the text. When they have finished the story, ask them to tell you the answers to your questions and also to complete the activities at the back of the book. Another idea is to ask children to write a review of the book for others in the class.

A Lesson Plan for each Reader is available to download from the *Ladybird Readers* website.

After this, introduce **spelling** activities. Teach children to learn how to spell words by the method of **Look, Cover, Write, Check**. Children look at the printed word; cover the word; write the word themselves; then check it against the original.

You can also play **games** with word cards or Flashcards to encourage the children to read quickly at sight. For example, divide the class into two teams and put two words on the board, such as *Venus* and *Jupiter*, and say one word out loud. A child from each team has to race to the board to touch the correct word first.

**After reading**

Reading should always be followed by comprehension checks. The activities at the end of the Readers will help you check general comprehension. You can also reinforce children’s mental map by recreating the story visually. For example, they could draw the storyline, or work together to act out the story.

You will also need to work on **bottom-up** word recognition. Start with familiar words that begin or end with the consonants *s*, *t*, *p*, and *l*, and then move on to other consonants. Write the words on cards, with the initial letter in a different color. Then, ask children to find the same word in their books. Use the same method to get children to recognize vowels in the middle of words.

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**Using *Ladybird Readers* at home**

Sharing a book at home with a parent or caregiver is one of the most powerful reading experiences for children. As homework, you and your child may reread together the Reader that the whole class is using at school. Or you may have chosen your own books to read. Either way, you are able to work at your child’s own pace and, where relevant, relate the book to experiences you have had together as a family.

Use the same **before reading** and **during reading** techniques as recommended on pages 24 to 25 for classroom use. **Paired reading** is also particularly recommended in this situation. If children have difficulty saying a word, give them a short time to correct themselves, but if they can’t do this, just say the word quietly and move on to the next part of the book.

Some parents are happy to read to their child in English; others feel more comfortable if they can play an audio version downloaded from the internet. At other times, your child may want to listen and read on their own. Please visit [www.ladybirddeduction.co.uk](http://www.ladybirddeduction.co.uk) for free audio downloads and extra material for each book.
How to use the Reader activities (levels 1 — 6)

Comprehension of meaning

In Level 1, the first activity often tests comprehension of key words. Children read a sentence, for example, “This is the girl,” and put a [ ] if the sentence matches the picture, or a [X] if it does not.

There is also often a selection of simple true or false questions for children to work their way through.

Another activity to test comprehension requires children to read incomplete sentences about the story and then write in the missing word.

“What?” and “Where?” questions, such as those found in activity 11 in The Red Knight (Level 3), test a higher level of comprehension. These require children to produce a spoken or written response. At first, children say or write one-word answers, such as yes or no. Then, they progress to whole sentences.

Decoding words and building sentences

Reordering jumbled letters to form a word from a picture prompt, finding the hidden words in a word search, and solving crossword puzzles are all activities that help children decode individual words.

Children also need to pay attention to the word order and grammar in sentences. Two activities that practice this include making sentences from jumbled words, and finding the matching halves of sentences.

Vocabulary

Each Reader contains a Picture words section at the beginning of the book. This gives children a way to check the meaning of words they may not know or remember. When children learn the meaning of words, it is an important step forward in using words independently. For example, activity 1 of The Pied Piper of Hamelin (Level 4) asks children to match a definition with a key word, such as, “This person’s job is to make a town safe and clean for all the people. (mayor)” Encourage learners at Level 4 to make their own dictionary of words and definitions.

Writing

Many of the reading skills activities also develop children’s writing skills. First, get children to practice writing sentences to answer questions in the book. Then, encourage them to make their own “zag book” version of a story.*

Speaking

The speaking activities in the books give children four reasons to communicate with others in English:

1 To talk about the story and their response to it, for example, in The Pied Piper of Hamelin (Level 4), “What was the mayor’s biggest mistake?”
2 To ask and find out information, for example, in Dinosaurs (Level 2), “Which dinosaur was this? What color was it?”
3 To relate what they have read to their personal experience, for example, in Peter Rabbit Goes to the Treehouse (Level 2), “Would you like to make a treehouse with your friends?”
4 To compare pictures, for example, in Sharks (Level 3), “Work with a friend. Look at the two pictures. Talk about these two sharks.”

To get the children to talk to each other, you need to demonstrate how to work with a partner. Encourage two children to ask and answer questions, working as partners, in front of the class. Then, get every child to work with a partner. Go around the class to listen and give feedback.

Using the audio downloads

All the Readers have an audio download available in a choice of British English or American English. Children can either read independently while listening to the audio version or listen to the story without reading. The audio recordings also help children to practice intonation and pronunciation, and can be used at home as well as in the classroom. All audio downloads are available at www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk

* A “zag book” is a long strip of eight pictures with a sentence underneath each picture to describe the stage of the story. The pictures are folded back-to-back in eight equal sections using an accordion pleat, to create a small eight-page book. Children draw their own pictures and copy sentences to make a personal version of the story to take home.
How to use the Activity Books (levels 1–4)

The Activity Book that accompanies each Reader gives children further opportunities to practice language skills, such as speaking, listening, singing, reading, spelling, and writing. An answer key for each title is available to download at www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk

Listening skills

The Activity Books contain specially written listening activities that allow children to practice how to listen carefully for top-down comprehension of the whole story, as well as bottom-up details of specific information. An example of listening for specific information is found in activity 6 of the The Jungle Book (Level 3) Activity Book. Here, children have to listen and identify details about Mowgli.

You can help children to remember the song by drawing attention to repeated patterns. For example, you can show how the sounds made by the letter patterns -ot, -op, and -ook are repeated in different words in this song from The Magic Porridge Pot (Level 1).

There are also activities in some of the Activity Books where children listen and color a picture. The audio tracks for the listening activities are available as downloads on the website.

Singing skills

Children love singing. The inclusion of songs in the Ladybird Readers Activity Books also fulfills specific language-learning criteria of spelling, reading, writing, and singing. The rhythm and melody of each song helps children to memorize the words and pronounce them clearly.

You can help children to remember the song by drawing attention to repeated patterns. For example, you can show how the sounds made by the letter patterns -ot, -op, and -ook are repeated in different words in this song from The Magic Porridge Pot (Level 1).

Reading and spelling skills

The Activity Book practices the skills of top-down reading through some familiar and some new activity types, for example, recreating the story from a jumbled set of pictures and sentences. There is also a strong emphasis on spelling. At Levels 1 and 2, there are activities to help children quickly identify the letters that begin and end words, such as reading “snakes” of joined-up words. In later levels, children are asked to decide on the correct spelling of a word from two possibilities.

Critical thinking skills

Reading helps children to mentally categorize and compare things and situations.

The Activity Books have specific activities to encourage these critical thinking skills. For example, Activity 5 of The Magic Porridge Pot (Level 1) asks children to categorize a set of words into clothes, animals, or places to live. Other activities encourage children to reflect on story characters and their motivations. Activity 11 in the Cinderella Activity Book (Level 1) asks:

Who do you like in the story of Cinderella? Who is not nice in the story?
Buying Ladybird Readers

The Ladybird Readers series covers five levels, and is designed to take children from Pre-A1 to A2 in the CEFR framework. It provides practice activities for children working towards the Cambridge English: Young Learners Starters, Movers, and Flyers exams.

Level 1
Pre-A1
YLE Starters • 100—200 words

Level 2
A1
YLE Movers • 200—300 words

Level 3
A1+
YLE Movers • 300—600 words

Level 4
A2
YLE Flyers • 600—900 words

Level 5
A2
YLE Flyers / KET • 900—1,500 words

Level 6
A2
YLE Flyers / KET • 1,500—2,000 words

To order Ladybird Readers, please contact your local distributor. More details can be found at: www.ladybirddeduction.co.uk